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C O N F I D E N T I A L KINSHASA 001203

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [KPKO](#) [PREL](#) [MOFS](#) [CG](#)

SUBJECT: MONUC OPERATIONS AGAINST FDLR A SUCCESS---WITHIN LIMITS

REF: KINSHASA 01099

Classified By: Polcouns Mel Sanderson for Reasons 1.4 B and D

11. (C) Summary: During MONUC's weekly diplomatic meeting July 20, MONUC Military Chief of Staff General Jean Francois D'Escury discussed MONUC's initiatives to address the FDLR problem, particularly in South Kivu. D'Escury stated that MONUC's recent military operations had been a success, expressed concern about FARDC soldiers' limited ability to support operations, and explained that there would be a brief technical halt in operations while reaffirming that MONUC would continue FDLR repatriation operations. End Summary.

12. (SBU) MONUC's Military Chief of Staff General Jean Francois D'Escury opened MONUC's weekly diplomatic meeting with a brief overview of MONUC's current efforts to address the FDLR problem in South Kivu. D'Escury reported that since July 4 MONUC had conducted ten cordon-and-search operations in South Kivu, including Operations Falcon Sweep (reftel), Iron Fist and Thunderstorm. As a result of these operations, MONUC successfully cleared out 13 FDLR camps and 1000 FDLR combatants from the Walungu and Karambe territories (about 10 km east and 50 km southeast of Bukavu).

13. (C) D'Escury also said he was concerned that the Congolese soldiers' transport difficulties could jeopardize the success of MONUC operations. FARDC soldiers are specifically responsible for staking out areas cleared by MONUC to insure that FDLR members do not return, however, they have been too slow to keep up with MONUC peacekeepers, and cleared areas are left unwatched. At this point it remains unclear whether FDLR members have rebuilt their old camp sites. (NOTE: The FDLR camps are rudimentary in nature and comprised of mostly huts, making FDLR reinstallation relatively easy. END NOTE.) MONUC noted that peacekeepers' fatigue was also becoming a problem.

13. (C) MONUC will briefly halt cordon-and-search operations in South Kivu in order to give peacekeepers a rest and perform equipment maintenance. D'Escury concluded by reassuring diplomats that Operation Thunderstorm was not the last of MONUC's FDLR operations to encourage FDLR repatriation.

14. (SBU) Comment: It appears that MONUC's operations have had initial success, and are pushing FDLR combatants out of their previously "safe zone" operating areas. At this point, however, this means they are moving further into the forested areas further east in the region, and it is not clear whether these efforts will succeed in producing larger-scale repatriation to Rwanda. The Ambassador and other members of CIAT just completed a trip to South Kivu with briefings and field visits hosted by the Pakistani forces conducting these operations. Observations from this trip will be reported septels. End Comment.

MEECE